

TESTIMONY OF THE SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

Dr. William Moritz

Director of Conservation, Safari Club International Foundation

Acting Director of Governmental Affairs, Safari Club International

Before the: House Natural Resources Committee

Hearing: Poaching American Security: Impacts of Illegal Wildlife Trade

March 5, 2008

Good morning. My name is Dr. William Moritz, Director of Conservation for Safari Club International Foundation (SCIF) and acting Director of Governmental Affairs for Safari Club International (SCI). SCI protects the freedom to hunt and promotes wildlife conservation worldwide. SCIF funds and manages worldwide programs dedicated to wildlife conservation, outdoor education and humanitarian services.

Mr. Chairman, the most important point that we would like to make to the Committee is that poaching is not hunting. All too often, media accounts of poaching magnificent animals such as the mountain gorilla refer to the activity as "hunting." Hunting is a sporting activity that is bound by law, regulations, and ethics. Poaching is not a sporting activity; it is unlawful and therefore unethical. SCI and SCIF would like to commend the US Fish and Wildlife Service for their commitments towards reducing poaching.

Poachers are not hunters. Poachers kill or capture wildlife indiscriminately, without limits or controls, in violation of law and with complete disregard for the welfare of the wildlife species. Hunters are conservationists. SCIF and SCI engage in many efforts to oppose poaching because poaching is contrary to conservation. If these efforts enhance the security interests of the United States or of any other peace-loving country which is home to sport hunters, then the hunting community is serving many purposes.

The U.S. has a very potent weapon to deal with the illegal take of wildlife – the Lacey Act. The Lacey Act has been extended to cover the importation of or commerce in wildlife taken, transported or sold in violation of the laws of other countries. The penalties under the Lacey Act are very significant -- \$10,000 for civil penalties, and up to \$100,000 for misdemeanors and \$250,000 for felonies committed by individuals. Fines for organizations are even higher and jail time is possible as well.

In the world of sport hunting, we are dealing with the sustainable take of a few animals, from a few species, under strict legal, administrative and ethical limitations. Sport hunting makes a positive contribution that helps to limit or eliminate illegal wildlife trade by being the eyes and the ears of the enforcement community and by economic contributions to wildlife management and local communities. As I just pointed out, in many countries sport hunters are required to be accompanied by government officials such as rangers. The cost of the ranger is borne by the hunter. Additionally, the continual presence of the hunt outfitter in the hunting area assures that roads are kept open and that people will see and report illegal activity observed during wildlife

management activities. Many hunt outfitters have programs and fund activities to combat poaching and to eliminate the presence of poachers in their hunting areas.

Sport hunters have a long and proud tradition of supporting wildlife conservation, including the enforcement of hunting seasons and quotas for harvest. Through the Pittman-Robertson Act in the United States, federal excise taxes on hunting licenses and equipment paid by hunters have been distributed to all fifty states for more than seventy years. Funds used by the states for matching grants under Pittman-Robertson are largely funded by license fees.

The story overseas is similar. Although there is no analogue to the Pittman-Robertson program in any other country, the money spent by sport hunters goes to provide operating funds for wildlife agencies in many countries. Perhaps more importantly, the benefits of sport hunting that flow to local people provide incentives for them to resist the presence of poachers. Through jobs, direct payments to villages, the provision of funds from hunting for civic projects in rural villages, and the provision of meat from game animals, sport hunting provides many benefits and gives value to the wildlife. The rural people who live in association with this wildlife are more likely to refuse to tolerate poaching if they understand that the poachers are robbing them of something of value.

SCI and SCIF have long supported the enforcement of wildlife laws. In relation to CITES, SCI provided \$50,000 for the development of an identification manual for customs officers and provided technical assistance in the preparation of the manual. We have just completed a three-year donation to support a wildlife enforcement officer position for Interpol. We have also signed on as a supporter of Countdown 2010, an effort by the international conservation community to meet many biodiversity goals by the year 2010.

Let me go back to the role of sport hunting today in many developing countries. It is these countries where wildlife tends to persist due to the very lack of development that makes those same countries subject to the negative effects of poaching. Using southern Africa as an example, sport hunting has been one of the main economic engines in rural communities that co-exist with wildlife on a daily basis. In many countries of southern Africa, agrarian or pastoral economies cannot flourish due to limited cultivatable or grazing land. In these areas, regulated sport hunting has been a consistent form of revenue for local communities. To take better advantage of sustainable wildlife use, many governments have begun Community Based Natural Resources Programs. These programs, in essence, devolve power from the central government so that locally created community councils can regulate and manage wildlife in their areas. These councils have the mission to utilize wildlife so that it remains a sustainable resource for their community.

Successful programs have been developed across Africa including, but not limited to, Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources, otherwise known as CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe, Living In a Finite Environment, known as LIFE in Namibia, and other programs headed by the Zambia, Botswana and Tanzania.

These communal programs have been successful because they effectively create a financial incentive for the rural communities to actively conserve wildlife. Revenue retention schemes ensure money generated from sport hunting ends up in the hands of indigenous people. In the case of sport hunting in southern Africa, communities in the most rural portions of countries reap the benefit of living communally and sustainably utilizing wildlife through Community Based Natural Resource Programs.

Here are some facts and figures on the positive economic impact that sport hunting has in Africa.

1. Trophy hunting by 18,500 hunters generates US \$200 million annually in remote rural areas of Africa in 23 countries. Private hunting operations conserve wildlife on 540,000 square miles, which is 22% more land than is found in the national parks of Africa. (Lindsey, Conservation Biology, 2007)
2. "Trophy hunting is of key importance to conservation in Africa by creating [financial] incentives to promote and retain wildlife as a land use over vast areas...". (National Geographic News, March, 2007)
3. In Namibia, 29 conservancies involve almost 150,000 rural individuals through trophy hunting, conservancy management or secondary industries.
4. The Zambian Wildlife Authority works with safari operators to ensure that as part of their contract they must develop and manage roads, employ Zambian Professional Hunters or Apprentice Hunters, ensure that a minimum of 80% of labor comes from neighboring communities, develop local infrastructure, notably schools, clinic and wells, and employ Zambian game scouts to manage both wildlife and poaching
5. CAMPFIRE has taken strides to restore natural resource use rights to 600,000 of the poorest people in Zimbabwe.
6. Sport hunting employs approximately 3,700 people annually (www.tanzania.go.tz/) and supports over 88,000 families (Hurt & Ravn 2000) in Tanzania.

Particularly in Africa, creating an incentive to coexist with wildlife has been a central reason why so many populations of species are now thriving, especially elephants, rhinos and lions. Of the 23 southern African nations that have regulated hunting, a trend of positive species population growth has been reported. The growing population of white rhino has been one of the most notable success stories. Unsurprisingly, in countries like Kenya, where wildlife utilization by indigenous people is extremely limited and where sport hunting does not exist, wildlife population levels continuously decline and are low. Trophy hunting in Kenya was banned in 1977 and this ban has resulted in an accelerated loss of wildlife due to the removal of incentives for conservation (Baker 1997; Lewis &

Jackson 2005). Some reports have alluded to a loss of nearly 60% of Kenya's wildlife since the start of the ban.

In recognition of the important role of sport hunting in wildlife conservation, our organization was recently granted non-government observer status by the United Nations and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). SCIF also participates in the deliberations of the CITES treaty on wildlife trade and the Convention on Biological Diversity

Let me end by reiterating our main points: poaching is not hunting, and sport hunters do not poach. Sport hunting remains as one of the few ways to generate money for wildlife management in other countries, and is an important incentive for conservation of elephants and other species. Through the presence of hunters, hunt operators and government officials in the field, and particularly through the economic stability that it can bring to remote rural areas, sport hunting plays a key role in combating the negative effects of poaching.

SCI and SCIF in partnership with the hunting community will continue to work toward outright elimination of illegal poaching. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important conversation.